



COUNTY OF PLACER
Community Development Resource Agency

Michael J. Johnson, AICP
Agency Director

PLANNING

HEARING DATE: July 22, 2010

ITEM NO.: 1

TIME: 10:05 am

TO: Placer County Planning Commission

FROM: Department of Public Works

DATE: July 13, 2010

SUBJECT: Focused Draft Environmental Impact Report Public Comment Hearing
(PEIR T20070805) Dry Creek/West Placer Community Plan
Transportation Element Update

COMMUNITY PLAN: Dry Creek/West Placer

DPW STAFF : Andrew Gaber/Phil Vassion

LOCATION: The *Dry Creek/West Placer Community Plan (Community Plan)* area is located in western Placer County and encompasses approximately 9,200 acres. Its boundaries are Baseline Road on the north, the Placer/Sutter County line to the west, the Placer/Sacramento County line to the south, and the City of Roseville to the east. Regional vehicular access to the Community Plan area is from Baseline Road, Watt Avenue, and Walerga Road.

APPLICANT: Department of Public Works

PROPOSAL: The Placer County Department of Public Works is preparing an update to the Transportation Element of the Dry Creek / West Placer Community Plan. The purpose of this public hearing is to receive comments on the Focused Draft Environmental Impact Report.

CEQA COMPLIANCE: The Draft EIR has been prepared by the Placer County Department of Public Works pursuant to the CEQA Guidelines. This Draft EIR is a "Focused" Draft EIR. It analyzes those impacts determined by the Initial Study and Notice of Preparation (NOP) to be potentially significant, and for which no mitigation was identified to reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level (CEQA Section §15143). An Initial Study for the proposed project was prepared in December 2007 by the Placer County Department of Public Works, and was circulated with an NOP on December 18, 2007 by the Placer County Community Development Resource Agency. The Initial Study and NOP prepared for the proposed project determined that Air Quality, Noise,

and Transportation and Circulation may have impacts that would be potentially significant and unavoidable, and that these resource areas should be carried forward to the Focused Draft EIR for analysis.

DRAFT FOCUSED EIR OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE:

The 45 day public review period for the Focused Draft EIR ends on July 23, 2010. The public hearing has been scheduled one day before the review period ends. The purpose for this hearing is solely to receive comments on the Focused Draft EIR. This hearing is not an opportunity to discuss the merits of the project, which will occur at a subsequent hearing. The County's EIR consultant will be present at the hearing to record comments and answer questions pertaining to the analysis in the EIR.

All parties who attend the hearing on the Focused Draft EIR and provide verbal or written comments will receive a written "Response to Comments" that is contained in the Final EIR. These same persons will also receive written notification of the subsequent hearing to be held pertaining to the policy document.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The proposed project is an update to the *Dry Creek/West Placer Community Plan – Transportation Element* to revise the transportation goals and policies for relevance to today's community environment and to ensure applicability in the future. The main objective of the proposed project is to identify the appropriate level of service (LOS) standards to accommodate future development within the *Community Plan* area. Additionally, as a part of the *Community Plan – Transportation Element* update, the County proposes the following roadway circulation system changes: keep PFE Road open (the *Community Plan* currently calls for closure of PFE Road at Cook-Riolo Road upon reaching certain traffic thresholds); control vehicular speeds by constructing speed reduction treatments on PFE Road and Cook-Riolo Road in order to preserve the rural character of the *Community Plan* area; widen selected *Community Plan* area roadways (Watt Avenue, Walerga Road, and PFE Road). In addition, the document evaluated the implication of removing or leaving in place the Baseline Road/Cook-Riolo Road/Woodcreek Oaks Boulevard intersection restriction.

No changes to any of the Community Plan's land use designations are proposed as part of this update. The proposed update to the Circulation Element includes extensively revising the goals and policies of the element including Level of Service revisions, defining the Future Transportation System and revising the Capital Improvement Program.

BACKGROUND:

The Cities of Sacramento and Roseville have become major growth areas in the region, and the *Community Plan* area's proximity to these areas have lead to spill-over growth in the area. The current *Community Plan* sets forth goals, policies, and implementation proposals to guide the development of the area until at least the year 2000. One of the goals is "to provide a safe, diverse, and efficient transportation/circulation system to serve the needs of residents of the plan area and others who use the system" (Placer County, 1990 [*Transportation/Circulation Element*, p. 12]). The *Community Plan* also provides overall direction for the various decision

making processes involved with the land development activities, including public and private decisions that may affect the future of the *Community Plan* area.

The current *Community Plan* directs that PFE Road be closed at Cook-Riolo Road when its average daily traffic volume exceeds 5,000 vehicles per day, which it does currently. When the *Community Plan* was written, this measure allowed the County to achieve its circulation goals, which included accommodating commute traffic patterns in the *Community Plan* area, while simultaneously minimizing traffic effects on Cook-Riolo Road and at the Dry Creek Elementary School site. Since current traffic volumes on PFE Road near Cook-Riolo Road have eclipsed the 5,000 vehicles per day threshold, an environmental evaluation of closing PFE Road is required. However, the *Community Plan* also allowed for unforeseen changes in circumstances, noting the possibility that the community may decide at a future date that closing PFE Road would not be in its best interest (Placer County, 1990 [*Transportation/Circulation Element*, p. 140]). If PFE Road were to remain open, the *Community Plan* notes that additional improvements to the road network would be necessary to maintain level of service (LOS) C (Placer County, 1990 [*Transportation/Circulation Element*, p. 152]).

In accordance with the current *Community Plan – Transportation Element*, Placer County has revisited the direction to close PFE Road, has analyzed the appropriateness of the current LOS C standard based on future traffic projections, and has analyzed the impacts of these projections to the roadway network. These analyses were utilized in the proposed update to the *Community Plan's Transportation Element*.

The *Community Plan* area envisions low-density, single-family, residential development in the non-floodplain areas, with commercial uses at the corners of PFE Road/Watt Avenue and PFE Road/Walerga Road. Since the creation of the *Community Plan*, southwestern Placer County has experienced substantial growth in the *Community Plan* area. Given the substantial growth over the past two decades and the development proposals currently under review, County staff has determined that closing PFE Road could have undesirable local and regional transportation effects.

AREAS OF CONTROVERSY:

The Focused Draft EIR is required to identify “areas of controversy” that includes issues raised by the public and by public agencies in the Notice of Preparation (NOP) period. The potential areas of controversy for the Dry Creek/West Placer Transportation Element Update include:

- Retaining the rural character of the Community Plan area.
- Traffic congestion associated with the redistribution of traffic throughout the Community Plan area.
- Traffic congestion at the Dry Creek Elementary School and Creek view Ranch Middle School.
- Removal or retaining of the Baseline Road/Cook-Riolo Road/Woodcreek Oaks Blvd. intersection restriction.

SUMMARY OF MAJOR ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES:

The following is provided as an overview of the environmental sections contained within the Focused Draft EIR that includes a project description and/or background information, the significant potential project-specific and cumulative environmental impacts and the mitigation measures developed to reduce these impacts. This staff report has been written to provide information about these environmental issues; however, the staff report does not provide a discussion or analysis of these issues.

Noise

The cumulative traffic noise levels generated by the proposed project would result in an increase in the traffic noise levels within the Community Plan. Specifically, the proposed project would result in increases in traffic noise levels up to 15.7 dBA Ldn. This largest increase in noise level is predicted on PFE Road between Pinehurst Drive and Cook-Riolo Road since PFE Road is no longer proposed to be closed. This increase at this location on PFE Road is considered to be significant under the 4 dB threshold of significance.

Noise-sensitive land uses could be exposed to noise in excess of normally acceptable levels or substantial increases in noise as a result of the operation of expanded or new transportation facilities (i.e. increased traffic resulting from roadway extensions, addition of through lanes, modifications of existing alignments, etc.). This impact is considered significant and unavoidable. Also, cumulative noise impacts related to increased traffic from assumed land use and roadways, as well as redistribution of traffic associated with the proposed project, are anticipated. These impacts are considered significant and unavoidable.

Air Quality

Construction of the proposed project would result in short-term impacts to the existing air quality in the Community Plan area. These impacts would include temporary increases of CO, CO₂e, NO_x, PM₁₀, PM_{2.5}, SO_x and ROG emissions.

Many air districts accept that comprehensive mitigation of construction emissions would bring impacts to below a level of significance. Mitigation measures identified in the Focused Draft EIR would require the proposed project to provide the PCAPCD with a Construction Emissions and Dust Control Plan, equipment inventory, and plan showing how construction equipment would meet NO_x and PM₁₀ emissions reductions. The mitigations cited would reduce short-term criteria air pollutant emissions to a less-than-significant level.

The proposed project would also produce a minor increase in GHG (greenhouse gases) emissions from construction operations only. Operation of the proposed project would not create any new GHG emissions sources; it would only redistribute existing traffic. Currently, there are no established significance thresholds for GHG emissions. However, GHG emissions are still addressed in the Focused Draft EIR.

Mitigation measures identified in the Focused Draft EIR would aid in the reduction of the emissions generated from all construction equipment exhaust and is consistent with federal and state emission reduction strategies. Existing CARB regulations and Early Action Measures would require emission reduction measures for diesel trucks and diesel off-road equipment. The project would adopt these measures.

Construction emissions are temporary. Once construction of the proposed project is finished, GHG emissions would cease. At this time, it is impossible to determine where the GHG emissions that were generated during the proposed project's construction would reside following dispersion to the atmosphere. However, given that a minor amount of GHG would be emitted during construction of the proposed project, and with implementation of mitigation measures and continuing compliance with federal and state GHG regulations, construction of the proposed project would not conflict with the state goal of reducing GHG emissions in California to 1990 levels by 2020, as set forth in the timetable established in AB 32. Thus GHG emissions construction impacts on the region would be less-than-significant.

Transportation and Circulation

Cumulative traffic impacts related to redistribution of traffic from assumed land use and roadways, as well as redistribution of traffic associated with the proposed project, are anticipated. These impacts are considered potentially significant because funding for mitigation to reduce these impacts to less-than-significant levels is not certain, specifically:

- Under the Cumulative Plus Project Scenario with PFE Road open, the proposed project would cause PFE Road/Cook-Riolo Road intersection to experience a decrease in the volume-to-capacity (v/c) ratio at a substandard level of service (LOS) condition in Placer County.
- Under the Cumulative Plus Project Scenario with PFE Road open, the proposed project would cause the cause the Baseline Road/Cook-Riolo Road/Woodcreek Oaks Boulevard intersection to experience a decrease in the volume-to-capacity ratio at a substandard LOS condition, cause the Baseline Road/Main Street/Foothills Boulevard intersection to experience a decrease in the volume-to-capacity ratio at a substandard LOS condition, and cause the Foothills Boulevard/Vineyard Road intersection to experience a decrease in the v/c ratio at a substandard LOS condition in the City of Roseville.
- Under the Cumulative Plus Project Scenario with PFE Road open, the proposed project would cause the Watt Avenue/Elverta Road intersection to experience a decrease in the volume to capacity ratio at a substandard LOS condition, and the Watt Avenue/Antelope Road intersection to experience a decrease in the volume-to-capacity ratio at a substandard LOS condition in Sacramento County.
- Under the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Analysis Cumulative Plus Project Scenario with PFE Road open, the proposed project would cause the Baseline Road/Cook-Riolo Road/Woodcreek Oaks Boulevard intersection to experience a

decrease in the volume to capacity ratio at a substandard LOS condition in the City of Roseville.

Biological Resources

No impacts are anticipated regarding effects on riparian habitat; interference with the movement of native resident or migratory fish/wildlife species; or conflicts with adopted local, regional, or state habitat conservation plans. Potentially significant construction-related impacts may occur regarding the disturbance of special-status species, wetlands or waters of the United States, and conflicts with local tree preservation policies.

Due to the focused nature of the Initial Study, only the speed-reduction treatment locations were analyzed for impacts to biological resources, as neither the component that would keep PFE Road open, nor the removal of the Baseline Road/Cook-Riolo Road/Woodcreek Oaks Boulevard intersection restriction would result in ground-disturbing activities. The Initial Study identified potential habitat for these special-status species: (1) Western pond turtle, (2) Tricolored blackbird, (3) Vernal pool branchiopods (vernal pool fairy shrimp and vernal pool tadpole shrimp), Swainson's hawk, and migratory bird species and raptors. Mitigation measures were developed to address potentially significant impacts to these species. The Initial Study also identified the need for a wetland delineation to identify potentially jurisdictional features. Mitigation measures were developed to address this impact. Finally the Initial Study identified the loss of native trees to accommodate the speed-reduction treatment as a potential impact. Mitigation measures were developed to address this impact.

Three new elements were added to the proposed project after completion of the Initial Study. These new project elements required an updated special-status species search to ensure an adequate biological resources analysis was completed. A memorandum dated January 7, 2009, was prepared to document the results of this analysis. It addressed the potential presence of special-status species and wetlands along PFE Road (Watt Avenue east to Walerga Road), Walerga Road (Baseline Road south to the Sacramento County line), and Watt Avenue (PFE Road south to the Sacramento County Line). The same methodology used in the Initial Study was completed for the follow-up evaluation for determining the potential presence of special-status species and wetlands.

The January 7, 2009 memorandum identified potential habitat for seven additional special-status species: (1) valley elderberry longhorn beetle, (2) western burrowing owl, (3) American badger, (4) bat species, (5) western spadefoot, (6) plant species (Bogg's lake hedge hyssop, Ahart's dwarf rush, Red Bluff dwarf rush, pincushion navaretia, slender Orcutt grass, Sanford's arrowhead, big-scale balsamroot, dwarf downingia, hispid bird's-beak), and (7) fish species (Central Valley steelhead and Chinook salmon). Mitigation measures were developed to address potentially significant impacts to these species.

Cultural Resources

Potentially significant construction-related impacts may occur if the discovery of unknown historic resources, archaeological resources, or paleontological resources are found, for the reasons described in the Initial Study. Implementation of mitigation measures identified in the Initial Study, and subsequent cultural resources memorandum dated January 7, 2009, would ensure that these impacts would be less-than-significant.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Potentially significant construction-related impacts may occur with the emission of hazardous waste/substances within one-quarter mile of schools, for the reasons described in the Initial Study. In order to reduce potential impacts to schools from construction of the proposed project, construction of the speed reduction treatments will be restricted to the summer months, when school is not in session.

Land Use and Planning

A potentially significant impact regarding a conflict with the existing *Community Plan – Transportation Element* may occur. Implementation of the following mitigation measure identified in the Initial Study would reduce potential impacts to a less-than-significant level: As a part of the proposed project, the Placer County Department of Public Works will update the *Transportation Element* to leave PFE Road open. The *Transportation Element* update would also revise its goals and policies for relevance to today's community environment and to ensure applicability in the future. The overall goal of the *Community Plan – Transportation Element* update is to maintain the rural nature of the *Community Plan* area and minimize the amount of traffic impacts, while allowing circulation patterns to be maximized.

No Impacts

The following environmental resource topics would have no impacts due to the proposed project: Aesthetics, Agricultural Resources, Geology and Soils, Hydrology and Water Quality, Mineral Resources, Population and Housing, Public Services, Recreation, and Utilities and Service Systems.

Alternatives

Alternatives that were studied in the Focused Draft EIR include the following:

1. No Project Alternative: Closing PFE Road
2. Alternative 1: PFE Road to Remain Open.
3. Alternative 2: PFE Road to Remain Open, Widen/Extend PFE Road (entire length), Cook-Riolo Road and Walerga Road. Also, to extend Vineyard Road to Walerga Road and remove the Baseline Road/Cook-Riolo Road Intersection Restriction.

4. Alternative 3: PFE Road to Remain Open, Construct Speed Reduction Treatments on PFE Road and Cook-Riolo Road, and remove the Baseline Road/Cook-Riolo Road Intersection Restriction.
5. Alternative 4: PFE Road to Remain Open, Construct Speed Reduction Treatments on PFE Road and Cook-Riolo Road, Widen Walerga Road, Watt Avenue and PFE Road from Watt Avenue to Walerga Road, and Remove the Baseline Road/Cook-Riolo Road Intersection Restriction.
6. PFE Road to Remain Open, Construct Speed Reduction Treatments on PFE Road, Widen Walerga Road, Watt Avenue and PFE Road from Watt Avenue to Walerga Road, and Keep the Baseline Road/Cook-Riolo Road Intersection Restriction.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

The Department of Public Works Staff recommends that the Planning Commission receive comments on the Focused Draft Environmental Impact Report and direct staff to respond to all written and oral comments in the Final EIR.

Respectfully submitted,



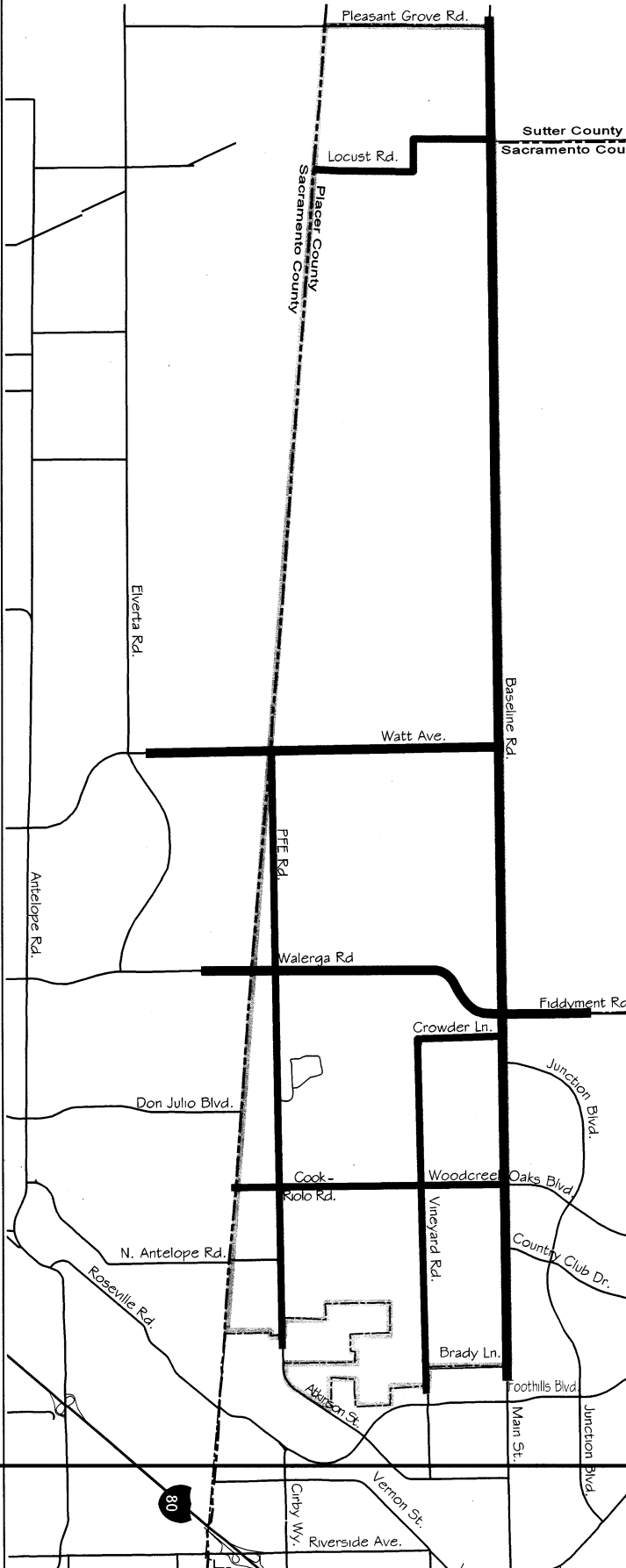
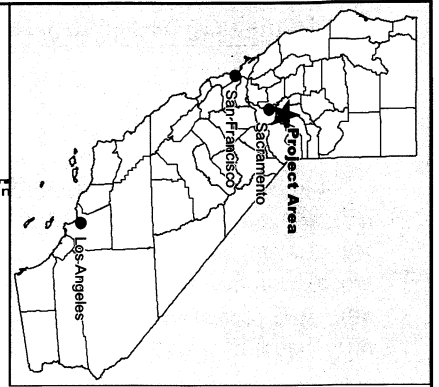
Phillip Vassion,
Associate Civil Engineer,
Placer County Dept. of Public Works

Attachments:

Attachment A - Vicinity Map

Attachment B - Focused Draft EIR (Previously Distributed to the Planning Commission on July 12, 2010)

cc: Keith Dewey, URS Corporation
Denise Heick, URS Corporation
David Stanek, Fehr and Peers
Andrew Gaber, Placer County DPW
Ken Grehm, Placer County DPW
Phil Frantz, Engineering and Surveying
Paul Thompson, Deputy Planning Director
Alex Fisch, Planning Department
Tom Thompson, Air Pollution Control District
Scott Finley, County Counsel
Michael Johnson, Community Development Resource Agency Director
Subject/Chron Files



Source:
Study Area Map, Fehr & Peers, 2009

- LEGEND**
- Community Plan Boundary
 - County Line
 - Local Streets
 - Collector Roadways
 - Arterial Roadways



NOT TO SCALE

**PROJECT AREA LOCATION AND
EXISTING FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION**

June 2010
28067005
Dry Creek West Placer
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FIGURE 1